Re-positioning adult education for development to thrive in nigeria

Ephraim Wordu (Ph.D)[1]
[1]Department of Curriculum/Instructional Technology
Faculty of Education
Ignatius Ajuru University of Education
Port Harcourt, Rivers State
Nigeria

ABSTRACT

The paper examines adult education practice in agriculture-led development strategy from pedagogical perspective. The paper believes that adult education has the potentialities for development but argues that there are missing elements in the adult education practice that are critical if sustained agricultural growth will be achieved. Instead of andragogy, transformative learning and liberatory method should be embraced. Also, instead of focusing on scientific knowledge systems alone, indigenous practices should be encouraged.

Keywords: Development, Agriculture-led strategy, Adult Education.

1. INTRODUCTION

Development since this decade has been characterized by rising levels of poverty. Agricultural production continues to remain low, leading to food insecurity in the nation inspite of strategies adopted by successive governments to develop agriculture. While what constitutes a suitable strategy re-reducing poverty continues to occupy the centre stage in development discourse, development economists have concluded that human resources must play a decisive role for developing nation's agricultural development and social and economic development (Todaro and Smith, 2009). There is need for effective adult education to achieve sustained agricultural growth. The relevance of adult education is in creating conducive environment for development to thrive through developing the right quality of labour force the country needs to meet its development objectives by equipping them with skills. The aim of this paper is to examine and re-position adult education to create an enabling environment for development to thrive.

What is Development?

Development was perhaps generally viewed in the 1950s and 60s in terms of economic growth model. A large proportion of literature indicates that to define development in terms of growth of GNP or national income is a conceptual flaw (Thirlwall, 2008) based on the experiences of the poor in both rural and urban areas. The lesson learnt from the literature is that development transcends economic objectives and values to embrace social objectives and values. Thirlwall, (2008) indicates that development involves life sustenance, self-esteem, freedom, people's entitlements and capabilities. Here development can be seen as a multi-dimensional process which involves the re-organization of the entire social, economic and cultural systems. It involves to changes in income, productivity, institutional, social and administrative structures as well as attitudes and practice (Onyeozu, 2007).

2. Agriculture-Based Strategy

In the past, the agricultural based strategy had been majorly characterized by subsistence farming. Today, this old method of cultivation for the family has been replaced by commercial farming with the introduction of modern technology in agriculture, such as irrigation, fertilizers, pesticides, tractors, improved seeds, etc. Other incentives that complement these include credit, road, and communication network. The introduction of technology in agriculture is the pre-condition for agriculture growth (USAID, 2008, Todaro and Smith, 2009). Farmers are considered entrepreneurs.

Agriculture-based strategy focuses on food production, relying on small-farmer agricultural progress (Todaro and Smith, 2009). It involves efforts to raise the level of farm and nonfarm incomes, employment, rural industrialization and access to education, health, nutrition, housing and a variety of related social and welfare services (Todaro and Smith, 2009).

Polices for developing agriculture are:
1. Enhance generation of national and social wealth through great support and import substitution.
2. Enhanced capacity for value addition leading to industrialization and employment opportunities.
3. Efficient exploitation and utilization of available agricultural resources.
4. Enhanced of appropriate and efficient technologies for rapid adoption.

Food Insecurity and its Challenges in Africa

Food insecurity is a threat to Sub-Saharan Africa. Millions of people are not able to have enough food. Threat of food insecurity is not new to international organizations and highly reputable agencies such as Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO). According to Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO) (Todaro and Smith, 2009) "catastrophic food shortages" affect over 270 million people. Food needed to feed the populations of Africa have grown to a size the traditional system of agriculture cannot cater. Therefore, food security requires modern technology in agriculture.

Some challenges that need to be addressed to achieve food security according to Obasanjor and Mobogunje

(19991) include:

- **The limited funding for agriculture:** Funds allocated to agriculture is very small relative to the huge investments required in the sector.
- **Lack of institutional farm credit for small-scale farmers:** Institutional credit tends to favour the wealthy than small-scale farmers, as a result, these small-scale farmers are unable to adapt and adopt innovations and expand their scale of farming operations.
- **Policy instability and inconsistency:** The root cause of policy instability and inconsistency is unwarranted movement of high ranking staff from one office to another and change in government. Each new government tends to develop its own new policy stance instead of establishing the existing policy. The result is that the basic direction of agricultural policy is compromised, leading a situation in which private investments and capital formation are lacking.
- **Dissemination of research findings:** Most research findings end up where they are carried out, in research institutes or academic institutions, as a result, relevant research findings for improving agricultural practice hardly gets to all farmers.
- **Background of farmers:** Majority of the rural farmers are illiterates and are therefore unable to apply modern technologies in agricultural practice.
- **Rural-urban migration:** Young men in rural areas drift to the cities in search of jobs, and better conditions of living, to the detriment of agriculture.

Food Insecurity in Nigeria

Nigeria is food insecure. Domestically produced food is insufficient for each member of the population to be food secure. Food insecurity and mal-nutrition levels are relatively high in rural areas. Food is therefore imported from other countries. Rice is one of the staple foods in Nigeria in which 2.5 million Metric tons of rice is required annually, but only 500 thousand metric tons are produced locally yearly (Okolo & Obidigbo, 2015) while the remaining proportion is imported. According to Okolo & Obidigbo (2015), Nigeria is the second-largest importer of rice in the world, with China as her biggest source of imports.

Low productivity is the major reason of food insecurity, (Obansanjo & Mobogunje, 1991). Unless the rate of food production exceeds the rate of population growth, which is stretching far beyond the aggregate increase in food production, Nigeria cannot be food secure. Low food productivity equates with poverty. The food insecurity crisis in Nigeria due to Nigeria's agriculture is rain-fed and she has not taken full advantage of her irrigation potential estimated between two and 2.5 million hectares (Ojo & Adebayo 2012). The contribution of irrigated agriculture to food production is therefore very small.

Agricultural Productivity: The Nigerian Experience

From 1970 to 1995, agricultural productivity rose from an aggregate of 126 to 226, with growth rate of 20.81% to 3.5%. Aggregate output and growth rate rose and fell during the period of 1970 to 1995, for example falling from 104.6 (11.57%) in 1985 to 108.3 (3.42%) in 1986. It rose from 116.1 (6.72%) in 1987 to 138.5 (16.17%) in 1988, falling from 153.0 (9.48%) in 1989 to 167.5 (8.66%) in 1990 and rising from 206.4 (2.23%) in 1993 to 226 (3.5%) in 1995, etc. Instead of steady growth, agricultural productivity rises and falls. The overall picture shows that agricultural productivity is low in Nigeria.

Creating a Conducive Environment for Development to Thrive

Conducive environment for development to thrive exists if there is sustained agricultural growth. By sustained growth, is that productivity increases all the time. This involves a lot of factors but the most important is adult education. Adult education is the most important factor to creating conducive environment for development to thrive. It contributes to every aspect of development process including economic, social, and political (Bown, 1979). The provision and expansion of adult education programmes is therefore a fundamental step towards creating on enabling environment to achieve development objectives. In addition, it requires effective processes of adult learning.

Concept of Adult Education

Adult education is a branch-out from life-long education. As a component of life-long learning, adult education is a tool for development in the 21st century. Okorie (2016:54) notes that adult education is defined as: "an organized and sequential learning experience designed to meet the needs of the adults" and any "deliberate systematically planned educational activity that has the adult as its target, that is designed around the interest and self-expressed concern of adult, and that it is part-time". UNESCO in Bown and Tomori (1979:269) defines adult education as:

> *The entire body of organized educational process, whatever the content, level and methods, whether formal or otherwise. Whereby persons regarded as adult by the society to which they belong develop. Thereby abilities enrich their knowledge, improve their technical or professional qualifications and bring about changes in fold perspective of personal development and participation in balanced and independent social, economic and cultural development*

It can be said that adult education is all-embracing meeting the needs of individual, organizations, community and society at large, development being one of societal needs.

Adult Education and Development

Development and adult education can hardly be viewed in isolation from each other. Adult education as part of life-long learning is linked to several aspects including economic, social, political and cultural development. At the heart of every development lies adult education (Ojesina, Folaranmi and Adegoke 2001). Akinola, Adepoju and Adegoke (2001) suggest that education particularly adult education is a crucial variable for economic growth and human progress.

Material possessions as pre-requisite for development are useless without quality human resources, even in agriculture. A well-skilled labour force is potential for growth. Skills are required to function effectively in order to realize increased production. Farmers that are skillful can understand options and therefore make good choices based on their knowledge and skills. They apply innovations in their operational activities. They are likely to be more interested in acquiring information and to use it to improve themselves and to evaluate their actions and activities and provide feedback needed by external agencies that want to assist them, and so on.

Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET)

Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) helps those who need improvement in their livelihood activities or wish to prepare themselves for employment or to keep abreast with current ideas. It is the best form of adult education for delivering skills. The origin of the technical/vocational education is traceable to the colonial period. Today, the training and education of farmers, fishermen, jobless youth and small scale business owners fall into this category. They are trained in areas such as crop production, aquaculture, livestock, wild-life and forestry, agro-processing, welding and fabrication, GSM repairs, hair dressing, fashion and designing, auto-mechanic, electrical/electronics, computer repairs, motorcycle repairs, trading in drugs, etc. (Patrick, 2008, Upaka, 2012).

Providers of technical and vocational education and training (TVET) cut across non-governmental organizations (NGOs), private bodies and religious organizations. There are numerous opportunities for training in technical and vocational education and training (TVET). However, the quality of the education provided is poor. This is the situation in most developing countries of the world.

Criteria for Quality Education

The criteria for quality education are often expressed in the form of a set of values such as policy, staff, course, marketing, teaching and learning, and outcomes (Jarvis 2004). Therefore, to determine the quality of technical and vocational education and training in Nigeria, the questions asked are:

1. What policy underpins the programme?
2. What courses were available?
3. What qualities of staff were employed to facilitate learning?
4. How was the information about the programme disseminated?
5. How effective are teaching and learning?
6. To what extent are goals achieved?
7. How effective are leadership and management in ensuring that learners achieve outcomes?
8. How well are learners guided and supported?

Under each question several questions may be asked to answer. To the question what policy underpins the programme may be asked how appropriate is the policy in terms of the needs and interest of adults? The question what courses were available? Requires some minor questions as: (i) how well do programmes and courses meet the requirements and interests of learners (ii) how adaptable are the courses and programmes to global changes, technological developments and the requirements to function effectively in self chosen occupations and/or livelihoods (iii) what is the range of courses and programmes regularly implemented for learners? (iv) how coherent are the courses and programmes and their ability to progress as far and fast as possible. The answer to the question, what quality of staff were employed to facilitate learning? Demands answer to such questions: (i) what are the qualifications of facilitators? (ii) How related are their areas of specialization to the needs and interest of the learners? (iii) How current is the knowledge of the facilitators in their field of activity. The question, how were the information about the programme disseminated could be answered by asking (i) was the information disseminated timely enough to enable learners register and prepare for the programme (ii) was information disseminated in the language understood by the learners (iii) was the information disseminated through an appropriate and accessible medium to all the learners taking into consideration those living in remote areas. In order to answer the question how effective are teaching and learning; the questions asked are: (i) how appropriate is teaching and resources to assist learners progress on their courses (ii) how suitable, regular and rigorous are assessments? (iii) What is the speed and accuracy with which any additional needs are identified and met? (iv) How relevant and current are the teachers' knowledge to the courses and what they teach ensuring that learners achieve outcomes.

Sherlock and Perry (2008:38) identifies seven questions to provide answer to the question how effective is leadership and management in ensuring that learners achieve outcomes; (i) To what extent is performance monitored accurately and is continuously improved through appropriate quality assurance and assessment tools (ii) To what extent is concern shown by leaders and managers at all levels to achieve continuous improvement and to assist learners (iii) To what extent are the effectiveness with which equality of opportunity and the values of diversity promoted in the

programme (iv) To what extent is good practice the guiding principle in recruitment (v) How regular and rigorous is staff performance monitored and improved (vi) How accessible and suitable are teaching aids and resources used in learning (vii) How efficient are resources utilized in aiding learning?

The question how well are learners guided and supported could be answered by asking the following questions: (i) To what extent are personal support, advice and guidance given to assist learners complete the programme successfully (ii) To what extent are the information, advice and guidance given to learners enable them choose correctly from the courses available to them? (iii) To what extent are the induction activities able help learners to adjust themselves and to meet the demands of the programme? (iv) To what extent are specialist support services available and accessible for those in need of them (v) To what extent are the guidance and support services sensitive to the learner's background?

In order to answer the question to what extent are goals are achieved, some minor questions are required such as: (i) to what extent are the learners able to acquire skills and utilize them in improving their condition (ii) to what extent were the learners able to read the world and analyze their world (iii) what is the extent of learners personal and learning skills (iv) what is the extent of learners achievement and retention overtime

Observation shows that adult education is characterized by poor leadership in Nigeria. There is need to develop effective leaders and managers as without this nothing else work.

Concept of Learning

In conventional usage, learning refers to change in behavour as a result of experience. Borger and Seaborne (1966) cited in Jarvis (2004) therefore defines learning as a relatively permanent change in behaviour which is the result of experience. This concept of learning does not capture all of the usages of the term learning by educationists as well as general public. The process through which adults acquire knowledge skill or new values is as important as the knowledge skills or values acquired at the end of the programme.

Thus, educationists especially in adult settings may use the term to refer to the process by which a person alone or with others seeks to acquire knowledge, skill or attitudes or as the process which individuals go through as they seek to change or enrich their knowledge, values, skills or strategies and to the resulting knowledge, values, skill, strategies and behaviour possessed by each individual (Jarvis 2004)

Analysis of Methods of Teaching

Educationalists agree that method of teaching is as important as teaching itself. Adequate knowledge of methods of teaching is a pre-condition for the effective teaching and learning. Analysis of methods of teaching therefore becomes a critical step in selecting the suitable method to facilitate adult learning. Methods of teaching in adult education can be classified as andragogical methods, transformative methods and libratory methods (Semali, 2009).

Andragogical method: Andragigcial is based on principles derived from andragogy, which is the science and art of helping adults to learn. According to Knowles (1990), the assumptions of andragogy are:

1. The need to know: Adults need to know why they need to know something before undertaken to learn it. The task of the facilitator of learning is to help the learners understand why they need to know something by creating an enabling environment them for discover the difference between their entry behaviour and set objectives, using such tools as personal appraisal systems, job rotation, exposure to role models, and diagnostic performance assessments (Elsevier 2005).
2. Learner's self-concept: Adults need to be responsible for their own decisions and to be capable of self-direction (Semali, 2009). Facilitators should seek to help them to act in responsible ways and thereby avoiding situations in which it may seem that others look down at them. Facilitators could help them improve the skills they need to do things by themselves than others to things for them.
3. Role of learners' experience: Adult learners have a variety of experiences in life that serve as a valuable resource for learning thus, in every group of adult learners there exist a wider range of individual differences in terms of background, learning style, motivation, needs, interests, and goals. Facilitators need to adopt individualized instruction and learning strategies.
4. Readiness to learn: Adults become ready to learn those things they need to know in order to cope effectively with life situations. Facilitators could help stimulate readiness through exposing learners to good examples and meaningful performance in life tasks, career counseling, simulation exercises, etc. Facilitators need to be knowledgeable in certain life skills that relate to learners' social and economic background.
5. Orientation to learning: Adults are motivated to learn to the degree that they perceive knowledge will help them perform tasks that affect their life situations. Teachers of adults could use examples of life tasks, on-the job training, learning by doing method to encourage learning. They need to be well exposed on how to use these techniques.

Transformative method: Transformative method is aimed at altering an individual's way of knowing or perspective from a poor to a better one or from a weak to a strong one. This is commonly referred as perspective transfer motion. It occurs through critical reflection and critical discourse. Outcomes of learning go beyond being more self-directed to changing ones perspectives. Mezirow (1978) identifies ten stages which every learners goes through in order to develop a perspective better than the previous one;
(1) He experiences a disorienting dilemma

(2) He undergoes self-examination with feelings of guilt or shame

(3) He does critical assessment of epistemic, sociocultural, or psychic assumptions

(4) He realizes that others have gone through the same experience

(5) Based on the revision of his old belief system, he explores new role relationships and actions

(6) He seeks knowledge and skills to build confidence in new ways of behaving (7) He plans a course of action

(8) He acquires some methods of teaching in adult education prove to be not merely a means of helping learners acquire knowledge in order to implement plans

(9) He develops confidence to experiment new roles

(10) He integrates himself into society.

Learning involves critical reflection; it also requires critical discourse (Mezirow, 1996, Wiltse, 2009). Facilitators help learners by providing them the specialized educational resource which will improve the quality of their self-directedness. This method allows learners to use the services of an adult educator but, does not permit "a dysfunctional dependency relationship between learner and educator" (Mezirow, 1981). The techniques used include critical questioning, consciousness raising activities (role play, debate, critical debate and simulation, etc) to help learners free themselves from being belittled by others.

Indeed thinking from one dimension to consider different views. This may lead them to change certain beliefs that impinge on their learning and occupational activity to adopting those values that favour their agricultural practice.

Libratory method: Unlike the other two: andragogy and perspective transformation, libratory method is designed to tackle the problem of social change. It is designed to raise individuals' consciousness of oppression and to in turn transform oppressive social structures through praxis" (Semali, 2009). It involves acts of cognition based on problem posing and dialogue. Libratory method draws from Freire's (1970) work. Dialogue is the distinctive in the teaching and learning process. Through dialogue, the facilitator can help learners become critically conscious of issues that affect them negatively but which they treat with levity. After becoming critically conscious, learners still need the assistance of educators to reject all the oppressive structures that surrounds them. Teaching techniques include kitchen meetings, protests, cooperatives and environmental projects (Cramton, 2009).

Adult educators need to adopt this method instead of concentrating on andragogy and transformative methods if they want to change the lives of their learners for better. It is the most suitable method of teaching in adult education "given that most of the target population live in impoverished home environments, under condition of abject poverty, high rate of unemployment, food insecurity, attack of HIV/AIDs, malaria and recently COVID-19 diseases, etc.

Indigenous Knowledge Systems

The importance of indigenous knowledge systems have begun to be recognized worldwide (UNESCO 2005 in Shizha and Abdi 2009). Shizha and Abdi (2009) point out that indigenous knowledge systems contribute to sustainable and equitable development, and can integrate multiple disciplines such as agro forestry, animal husbandry, biodiversity, crop production and preservation and conservation at a higher level of efficiency, effectiveness, adaptability and sustainability than many convectional knowledge systems.

Inspite of this, scientific knowledge has continued to dominate in adult education settings. This informs Obasanjor and Mobogunje (1991) to assert that the "stock of experimental knowledge of the small-scale farmer spanning over a long period of agricultural practice has not been fully tapped and integrated into modern or scientifically-based agriculture. This has some consequences, which include rural-urban migration, marginalization of small-scale farmer, lack of improvement in the quality of life, social inequality and crisis. Therefore, there is need to embrace indigenous knowledge systems in adult education. This could be done through an iterative fashion that allows practice to proceed from theory and theory derived from practice. (Semali, 2009). This will "enhance dignity in indigenous communities, enhance their sense of self-respect and respect for their autonomy and actions" (Semali, 2009).

Conclusion

In conclusion, it can be said to create conducive environment for development to thrive adult education is the answer. Quality education is not always available. It has to be given attention deliberately if not undesirable consequences will result. Libratory method is critical to bringing change in the lives of majority of the people. Libratory method is preferred to andragogy and transformative learning. Effective leadership is required than other issues for quality education. Finally, instead of focusing solely on scientific knowledge, adult education embraces indigenous knowledge systems.

REFERENCES

1. Adams, W.M. (2012). *The future of sustainability: Re-thinking environment and develop in the 21st century*. In N J. Smith-Sebast (ed). Sustainability 12/13 USB: McGraw Hill Companies.

2. Akinola, B. Adepoju T, and Adegoke T.G. (2001). Extension Education and Development. In J.J. Okedara, C.N. Anyanwuare M.A. Lanregmole (eds.).

3. Anyanwu, J.C, Oyefusi A. Doikhenan and Diamond F.A. (1997). *The structure of Nigerian Economy (1960-1997).Onitsha: Joane Educational publishers Ltd.*

4. Bown L. (1979). Scope and purpose of Adult Education in West Africa. In L. Bown and S.H.O. Tomori (eds.). Adult Education in West Africa London: Hutchinson & Co publishers Ltd.

5. Brown, L. and Tomori S.H.O. (1979). Scope and Purpose of Adult education in West Africa. In L. Brown and S.H.O. Tomori (eds.). A handbook of Adult Education for West Africa. London: Hint Chinson & co publishers Ltd.

6. Ezimah, M.O.A. (2004). *Knowing adult Education, Its meaning, Scope and Processes*. Owerri: Springfield.

7. Freire, P. (1970). *Pedagogy of the oppressed New York*: The Seabury Press.

8. Gramton, P. (2009). *Transformative learning and AVE for social sustainability*. In P. Willis, S. Makenzie and K. Harris. (eds.). *Rethinking work and learning, adult and Vocational Education for social sustainability*. Australia:

9. Jarvis, P. (2004). *Adult Education and life-long learning*. London: Routledge

10. Mezirow, J. (1978). *Education for Perspective Transformation; women's re-entry programme in community colleges.* United Kingdom: Hodder Education.

11. Mezirow, J. (1981). *A Critical theory of adult Education and learning*. Washinton D C.

12. Obasanjor, O. and Mobogunje A. (1991).Elements of Development. Ogun State: African Leadership Forum Publishers.

13. Okolo, C.V and Obidigbo C. (2015).*Food security in Nigeria: An examination* of availability *and accessibility in Nigeria. International Journal of Economics and management Engineering. 9(9)*

14. Okorie, C.U. (2016). *Adult Education and Flood management in Nigeria. Journal of NNCAE 21 (1).*

15. *Onyeozu, A. M (2007).Understanding community development. Port Harcourt. David Stones Publishers LTD.*

16. Patrict, J.M (2008). Evaluation of Poverty Alleviation Programmes of selected Non-Governmental organization in Lagos and Rivers State. Thesis: Diversity of Port-Harcourt.

17. Rethinking Adult and Non-formal Education. Ibadan: Stiring Horden publishers (Nig) Ltd.

18. Semali, L. (2009). *Cultural perspective on African Adult education: Indeginous ways of knowing in life-long learning.* In A.A. Abdi and D. Kapoor. *(eds). Global Perspective on Adult learning*, Australia*:*

19. Sherlock, D. and Perry N. (2012).*Quality Improvement in Adult Vocational Education and training: Transforming for the global Economy*. London kogan Rage Limited

20. Shizha, E. and Abdi A. (2009).*Globalization and Adult Education in south. In* A. Abdiand D. Kapoor *(eds). Global perspective on adult education. Newyork; Polgrare Macmillian*

21. Table source: CBN (1995 a, b). cited in Anyanwu, et al (1997)

22. Thirlwall, A. P. (2008). *Development and economic growth*. In Vandana D. and Robert B. P. (eds.). *The companion to Development Studies.* United Kingdom: Hodder Education.

23. Thirlwall, A.P. (2008). Development and economic growth. In Vandana D. and Robert B.F (eds.). *The companion to Development Studies*; London: Hodder Education.

24. Todora, M.P. and Smith S.C. (2009). *Economic development*. England: Pearson Education ltd

25. Upaka, (2012).*Cost Effectiveness of Non-formal Vocational Education Programmes in Rivers State. Thesis, University of Port-Harcourt.*